



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT JUNE 8, 2006

- Project:** RENAMING SIDNEY DRIVE TO ROBERT FISHER DRIVE - (PLN2006-00287)
- Proposal:** To consider a Finding for the renaming of a public street from Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive located on the west side of Shinn Historical Park.
- Recommendation:** Recommend approval to City Council
- Location:** West side of Shinn Park known as Sidney Drive in the Central Planning area. (See aerial photo next page)
- People:** Joan Serafino, Applicant, Mission Peak Heritage Foundation
Al Minard, Applicant, Mission Peak Heritage Foundation
City of Fremont, Owner
Nancy Minicucci, Staff Planner (510) 494-4476;
nminicucci@ci.fremont.ca.us
- Environmental Review:** This project is exempt from CEQA per Section 15301, Existing Facilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Mission Peak Heritage Foundation (MPHF) requests the City change the name of Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive. The MPHF's letter, accompanying the application, states the name change is intended to recognize Dr. Robert Fisher, a leader in the historic preservation movement in Fremont.

In the 1960's, Dr. Robert Fisher started a movement to save Fremont's local history by capturing the many changes the township incurred through recorded interviews and photographs. Dr. Robert Fisher was born in Ayer, Massachusetts on January 4, 1919. He and his wife moved to Niles, California in 1950 where he started his medical practice. In 1958, Dr. Fisher joined the campaign to construct a local hospital – Washington Hospital.

Dr. Robert Fisher joined the Washington Township Historical Society and became director and eventually coordinated local history exhibits. Among his other efforts, he contributed to the Fremont City Incorporation campaign; served on the first Recreation Commission; served as chairperson of the Historical Architectural Review Board and developed the Primary Historic Resources list in the City's General Plan. Dr. Fisher formed the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation after the Washington Township Historical Society Board voted against supporting the preservation of the Shinn House and its donation to the City of Fremont. It was under his organization that he was able to assist Florence Shinn and her family into willing the Shinn House to the City of Fremont in 1962. Under Dr. Fisher's leadership, MPHF restoration projects includes the Shinn House, Patterson House, Harvey House, Galindo Adobe, Clark's Hall, Rix House and Chadborne Carriage House. Dr. Fisher died on July 27, 2004.

The applicant feels the proposed location for Robert Fisher Drive is ideal since it is located next to the property that started the historical movement and the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation in Fremont.



Figure 1: Aerial Photo (2002) of Project Site and Surrounding Area.



SURROUNDING LAND USES:

- North: Residential, Light Industrial
- South: Residential / Institutional
- East: Shinn Historic Park / Low density residential
- West: Low density residential

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

On March 12, 1985 the City Council adopted a resolution outlining a policy for the naming of streets in *new developments* to honor noteworthy persons and persons, living or deceased, who have made a significant contribution to the community. This policy includes all Council Members from the date of the City's incorporation. No streets shall be named for persons in the employ of the City of Fremont at the time the street is named.

There is a clear policy for naming new streets and assigning address numbers, but not for renaming existing streets. Currently, the Fire Department is responsible for naming streets and numbers. In naming streets, the Fire Department follows a policy to avoid duplication or similar sounding names with existing streets, hard to pronounce names and names that may sound confusing to dispatch. New street names are typically incorporated into tentative tract maps submitted for approval by the Planning Commission.

Since 1990, two street name changes have occurred. In 1991, the City changed the name of a segment of Durham Road to Auto Mall Parkway westerly of Interstate 680 to its westerly terminus. That name change was part of a Development Agreement between the City and Santa Fe Pacific Realty (now Prologis). The name change was regarded as vital to the economic success of the Auto Mall which was to be located approximately 4,000 feet from Interstate 880 and near the end of a street which was not functioning as a major regional route. Because the creation of a major regional auto sales area away from major region-serving freeways was risky, a major advertising campaign and freeway signage that provided freeway exposure to the mall was considered compelling reason to change the name.

In 1993, the City also approved a name change from Hillside Avenue to Gurdwara Road in the Niles Planning Area. The street, approximately 1,000 feet in length, is located off Mission Boulevard. Leaders of a Sikh temple located on that street requested the name change. The temple is the only building fronting on that street. One stated reason for the name change was to take the opportunity to recognize the cultural diversity of the community.

Although there is no specific City policy for considering a street name change proposal the following procedure was followed during previous name change applications:

1. An application is filed with the Community Development Department. The Council may direct that the City act as an applicant. Under this action all costs would be paid from the City's General Fund. Alternatively, Council may direct the applicant to apply formally for the street name change and pay all associated costs.
2. After an application is made, staff reviews the proposed name change with emergency service agencies and for conformance with existing street naming ordinances and policies.
3. All property owners on the street of the proposed change are notified of a public hearing to be held by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission adopts a motion recommending to the City Council an action on the proposed street name change.
4. The City Council may hold a public hearing and may then adopt a resolution for the street name change.
5. The City Clerk forwards a copy of the resolution providing for the change of name to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and notifies all service providers and agencies.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant, the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, is requesting that the City rename Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive to commemorate his significant work in Fremont as a historic preservationist. Sidney Avenue extends north from Peralta Boulevard in the Central Planning Area and is west of the Shinn Historic Park. Five other streets intersect with Sidney Drive: Adler Court, Ridley Drive, Kruger Avenue, Hardy Place and Gilbert Avenue. Sidney Drive is designated as a minor local street and measures approximately 700 feet long. There are no property addresses that serve Sidney Drive.

In order to avoid confusion with an existing street named Fisher Place, the applicant has proposed to change the name of Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive. The Fire Department has agreed to this proposal.

Should the street name be approved, all existing signs and poles will have to be replaced. Staff estimates the total cost of the new signs and poles to be approximately \$600 for materials and labor.

PROJECT ANALYSIS:

General Plan Conformance:

The existing General Plan land use designation for the project site is Local Street. The proposed project is consistent with the existing General Plan land use designation for the project site because the renaming of Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive does not change the existing roadway classification. The following General Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies are applicable to the proposed project:

FUNDAMENTAL GOAL 1: Vital connections between the history and heritage of the community and everyday life.

Analysis: As part of this Fundamental Goal, the City is encouraged to seek ways to enrich our everyday lives by drawing connections to the city's past. Renaming the street, as proposed, next to the existing Shinn Historic Park will draw a connection between one of the City's first historic preservationist to one of the City's prized Primary Historic Resources.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT:

Public hearing notification is applicable. A total of 111 notices were mailed to owners and occupants of property within 300 feet of the site. The notices to owners and occupants were mailed on May 22, 2006. A Public Hearing Notice was published by The Argus on May 25, 2006.

In addition, three public hearing notices were mailed as a courtesy to interested parties: Alameda County Historical Society, Museum of Local History, and Washington Township Historical Society.

Staff has also been in contact with Mr. James Shinn who is supportive of the renaming of Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive.

ENCLOSURES:

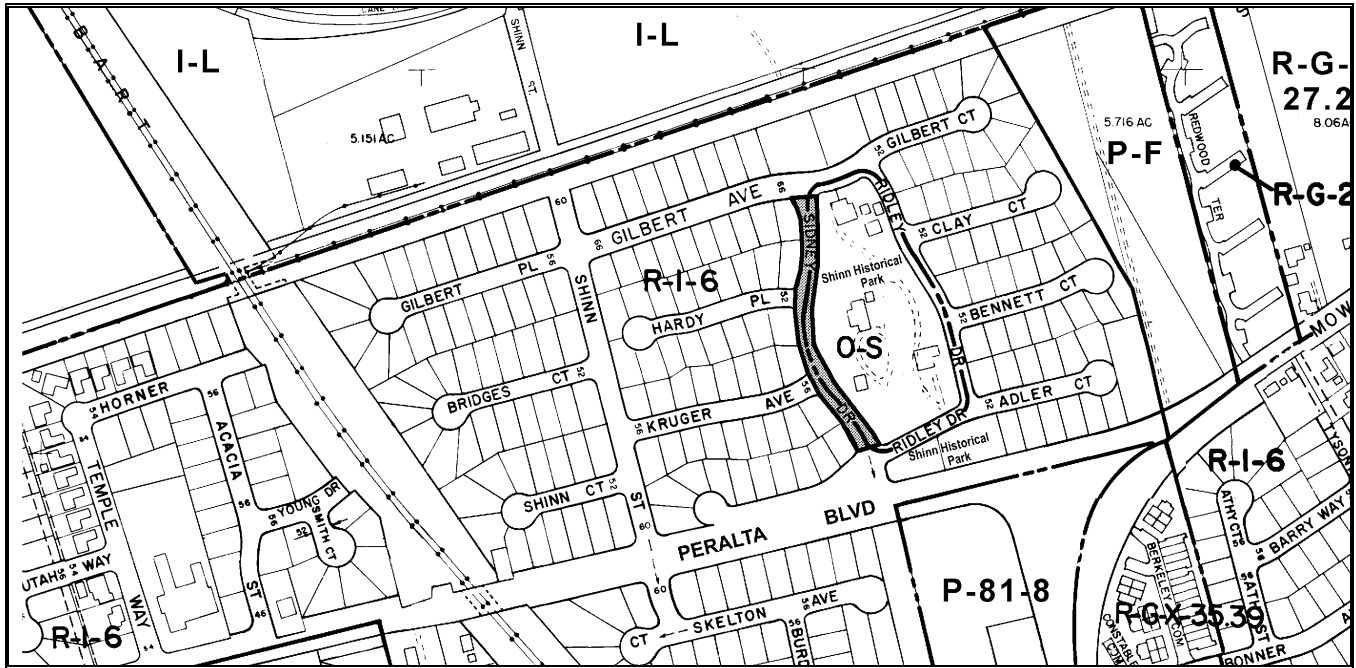
Informational Items:

1. Letter from the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Hold public hearing.
2. Recommend the City Council approve the name change from Sidney Drive to Robert Fisher Drive in the Central Planning Area by Resolution.

Existing Zoning
Shaded Area represents the Project Site



Existing General Plan

